

I. Introduction

In 1971, a report entitled Land Use Survey Update and Land Development Plan was prepared for the Town of Selma. Other recent and useful reports that were beneficial in preparing this document were a 1976 Community Facilities Plan, a 1976 Community Development application, and a 1974 Triangle J Inventory and Atlas.

Over the years, numerous changes have occurred. Such events as statellite annexations, community development funds, and an increasing manufacturing base have all had an impact on land uses within the community, both for the present and future.

To help visualize the implications of these and other changes and formulate plans to ensure the timely and orderly conversion and development of land in and around Selma will be the major objectives of this report. The successful implementation of many of the ensuing recommendations becomes a necessary first step to help the community achieve its objectives.

A. Regional Setting

The Town of Selma occupies 1088.9 acres (1.70 square miles) of land slightly north and east of the approximate center of Johnston County. The county itself is located in the mid-central section of North Carolina approximately sixteen (16) miles southeast of Raleigh, the state capitol. Seventeen (17) townships and ten (10) communities--the largest of which is Smithfield, the county seat--comprise the 795 square mile area of this predominantly agricultural entity.

B. History

This portion of what was then Craven County was initially settled by the Ulster Scots, and later by the English. By 1746, the county was formed. Relying heavily upon its fertile soil, agriculture became the dominant means of livelihood. By 1900 though, the farmers had begun a transition toward cash crop farming by increasing emphasis on tobacco. By the early 1970s, according to available statistics, tobacco had grown to be the number one agricultural product in the economy of Johnston County.

Events leading to the creation of Selma were closely tied to the agricultural growth of Johnston County. With two million dollars (\$2,000,000.00) from the General Assembly and one million (\$1,000,000.00) from the citizens of the State, a railroad would be built from Charlotte to Greensboro to Raleigh where it would connect with the Raleigh and Gaston Road leading to Goldsboro. Begun in the late 1840s and completed in 1856, the line greatly facilitated the egress of agricultural produce from the county and the ingress of much needed supplies from other areas. On this section of track between Raleigh and Goldsboro, the Town of Selma was born.